

Quebec, 4th January, 1834.

REVEREND SIR,

The circumstances and prospects of the Church in this diocese impose upon me the duty of calling your attention and that of your congregation to a measure which might indeed without impropriety have been long ago urged, but the execution of which can no farther be delayed.

The maintenance of the Clergy in the Canadas has hitherto, as you are aware, with very slight exceptions, been provided for partly by His Majesty's government, and partly by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, whose funds are at this moment charged with allowances to about 150 Missionaries in the British North American Provinces, besides Theological Students, Catechists and the Widows of Missionaries receiving pensions.

The Circular which you have lately received from the Secretary of this Society has informed you of the diminution of its resources caused by the reduction and approaching extinction of the grant from the Imperial Parliament, which for a long series of years had constituted part of its funds; and of the consequent necessity for a great retrenchment in the allowance made for the support of its existing Missions, and a total suspension of the establishment of additional stations.

X The former measure, without some speedy remedy, will press with severe inconvenience upon many of the Clergy of this Diocese: the latter, if no other resource should be substituted, will leave the Church without means to answer the calls made upon her on all sides from the rapidly rising settlements in these Provinces, to provide for the spiritual wants of the inhabitants.

It is, however, evidently unreasonable to expect that the Colonial Church should continue very long to draw its supplies from the mother country, and whatever may be the ultimate fate of our just endeavours to preserve inviolate the allotment of the Clergy Reserves, the nature and situation of that property must prevent its becoming available at present to the entire support of any number of Clergy at all approaching to what the Diocese requires.

I must not be here understood as either speaking in disparagement of that provision which the wise and pious munificence of the Government has allotted for the permanent support of the Church, or as abandoning the hope that it will yet be made to render its destined fruit. It is that provision which humanly speaking, I regard as the means upon which we must rely for placing the institutions of religion upon a solid basis throughout the country, and perpetuating a body of well qualified Clergymen, at the same time that it is not fairly liable to be represented in an obnoxious light as imposing a burthen upon the people for the support of the Church. And if it had not been for untoward circumstances which, especially in the lower Province, have obstructed the operations of the Clergy Reserve Corporations, some greater advances might have been already made towards the general efficiency of this reservation for the purposes to which it was originally destined.

It is only therefore, as a temporary measure that, (as I hope) it will be found requisite to call to any considerable extent upon the people. But in the actual position of the Church, there is a very evident necessity that wherever their circumstances permit it, they should contribute towards the support of their Minister. I have indeed received a direct suggestion in an official letter from the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as to the imperative need which exists for resorting to such a measure. And I trust that there will be no backwardness to answer the appeal. When it is considered how much has been thus far done for the people without charge to themselves, and how plainly it is enjoined in the word of God that men should honor the Lord with their substance, and suffer those to reap of their worldly things who sow unto them spiritual things, I indulge a hope that no difficulty will be found in carrying those principles into effect among our congregations.

In all cases where the salary of the Minister, in conformity with the scale of reduction now established, is confessedly inadequate to the decent and respectable maintenance of himself (and

his family, if he has one,) according to his station in society, it will be expected that an addition shall be made to his income by the voluntary contributions of his hearers; and it will be necessary to establish a mutual understanding that the Society continue to afford their allowance upon condition that the Congregation contribute an amount proportioned to their resources.

It is difficult to establish any kind of uniform rule in fixing the amount of this sum; but I am disposed to say that with the exception of the four principal towns of the Diocese, the maximum should be £100 currency, a year. The minimum I would fix at £25. The gradation of the intermediate annual sums must not be broken into any thing smaller than a difference of £5, between one sum and another.

I shall commit it to the Archdeacons in correspondence with the Clergy of their respective Arch-deaconries to ascertain the amount which can be raised in each parish or mission, and to report their conclusion to me so soon as conveniently may be, in order that no time may be lost in carrying the system into operation throughout the Diocese.

It only remains to notice, upon this subject, the provisions to be established respecting the manner of collecting and paying the contributions. I conceive that it would be objectionable in several points of view that the Clergyman himself should either solicit or collect them from house to house. Neither do I think that the Church-wardens alone can be fairly expected to take upon themselves the duty or the responsibility. I would therefore recommend that the Congregation proceed first of all to the election, after due notice of such intention having been given, of persons to constitute a *Select Vestry*, whose number should not exceed ten, nor be fewer than four, and to whom, in conjunction with the Church-wardens, should be entrusted both the management of this matter, and such other temporal concerns of the Church as may fall most properly within their charge. The Vestry-men now to be elected might continue in office till Easter, 1835, after which the stated elections may proceed according to rule. They should be responsible to the Minister for the sums received from the Subscribers at the periods mentioned in the accompanying form, which I am disposed to think are the most generally suitable that can be named.— It will be necessary that the subscription paper should express the obligation of the contributors who sign their names to continue their subscriptions for the three years next ensuing, payable at these periods; and the parties responsible to the Clergyman must sign a separate obligation, to be lodged in his hands. In some cases it may be found expedient to admit the partial introduction of contributions in produce. In others, if it should be found more easy of management, the payment may be made chargeable in part upon the ~~pew-rents~~ instead of being made in the shape of contributions raised by subscription.

You will please to communicate the foregoing letter to your Congregation, either when assembled after divine service, or at some meeting specially convened for the purpose.

I have the honor to be,

Reverend Sir,

Your faithful servant,

C. J. QUEBEC.

Rev. J. C. Blake

FORM, No. 1.

We whose names are hereunto Subscribed do promise to pay the several sums attached to our names into the hands of the Select Vestry of the [Parish, Township or Mission] of _____ in the Province of Lower [Upper] Canada, as our annual Subscription towards the support of a Clergyman of the Church of England, duly appointed thereunto. One moiety thereof to be paid on the 1st March and the other on the 1st September in each year. This obligation to continue in force for the three years next ensuing.

FORM, No. 2.

We whose names are hereunto attached, being duly elected Members of the Select Vestry of the [Parish, Township or Mission] of _____ in the Province of Lower [Upper] Canada, do promise to pay over into the hands of the Clergyman of the Church of England, duly appointed to the cure of souls amongst us, the whole of such sums subscribed as are paid to us, (according to the agreement lodged in our hands) by the inhabitants of the [Parish, Township or Mission] of _____ towards his support: and to use all due diligence in the collecting of the same. One moiety thereof on the 10th March and the other on the 10th September in the year wherein we are in office.